

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
SUN-TIMES  
NOV 21 1975

M - 550,983  
S - 701,160

## Giancana quote: Fidel plot a big con

By Thomas B. Ross

Sun-Times Bureau

WASHINGTON — The late Chicago gang boss Sam Giancana was reported Thursday to have confided to a friend that an underworld operation, designed to assassinate Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro, actually was a big con game against the Central Intelligence Agency.

The Senate intelligence committee's assassination report also confirmed that the CIA approved a wiretap for Giancana on a girl friend and intervened to prevent the deportation of a fellow Chicago mobster, John Rosselli.

Giancana, who was slain in his Oak Park home last June, was quoted as having told a friend, Joseph Shimon, that Robert A. Maheu, who organized the scheme, was "conning the hell out of the CIA."

According to the committee report, the CIA laid out \$12,700 in cash and provided "explosives, detonators, rifles, handguns, radios and boat radar costing \$5,000," but never was able to establish that any attempt actually was made on Castro's life.

Giancana reportedly found the whole thing highly amusing. When local police in Las Vegas discovered the wiretap, Rosselli testified: "I remember his expression, smoking a cigar, he almost swallowed it laughing about it."

The committee report traced this sequence of events:

Late in 1960 the CIA approached Maheu, an ex-Federal Bureau of Investigation man who had done odd jobs for it before, to recruit underworld figures involved in gambling in Cuba to assassinate Castro.

Maheu recruited Rosselli, who in turn recruited Giancana and Santo Trafficante, the "Cosa Nostra chieftain in Cuba." Maheu testified that Giancana's job was to "locate someone in Castro's entourage who could accomplish the assassination."

Giancana demanded an immediate personal favor — that an electronic bug be placed in the hotel room of his girl friend, whom he suspected of having an affair with another man.

With CIA assistance — according to a memo by the late FBI director J. Edgar Hoover — the tap was installed. But the private eye who did the job left the equipment unattended one afternoon and it was discovered by a maid, who called the local sheriff.

"It is apparent that the CIA paid for the tap," the report concluded by passing money to Maheu in the form of a retainer. Afterwards, the CIA intervened successfully with the FBI and the Justice Department to prevent Maheu's prosecution.

Early in 1961, the CIA turned over poison pills and \$10,000 — advance money on a \$150,000 assassination fee — to Maheu, Rosselli and Trafficante at a meeting at the Fountainbleau Hotel in Miami.

The money and the pills were supposed to go to a Cuban who supposedly ran a restaurant Castro frequented. But, according to the committee report, "the attempt met with failure."



SAM GIANCANA

CIA officials testified that Rosselli and Giancana were "never paid a cent" for their services. But the officials conceded the involvement in the Las Vegas wiretap and also admitted approaching the Immigration and Naturalization Service on Rosselli's behalf in 1971.

The CIA's inspector general speculated that Castro had stopped going to the restaurant. Maheu suggested that the Cuban agent might not have received the necessary "go signal."

In any event, a second attempt was made in early 1962. By that time, Maheu and Giancana had been dealt out of the operation as "untrustworthy." But Rosselli was kept on under the direction of CIA operator William Harvey.

Pills were again passed to Harvey, who passed them to Rosselli, who said he was still working with the same Cuban. As payment, the CIA transferred \$2,700 to Rosselli and arranged for the delivery of weapons and equipment that the Cuban purportedly demanded for the anti-Castro underground.

Once again, the operation was called off without any results.

1-ROSS, Thomas B.  
GIANCANA, Sam  
CASTRO, Fidel  
CIA 4.01 ASSASS.  
CIA 04 HARVEY, Wm.  
~~0291~~ MAFIA